



Rethinking Governance: The Centrality of the State in Modern Society

By *Stephen Bell, Andrew Hindmoor*

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Several problems plague contemporary thinking about governance. From the multiple definitions that are often vague and confusing, to the assumption that governance strategies, networks and markets represent attempts by weakening states to maintain control. Rethinking Governance questions this view and seeks to clarify how we understand governance. Arguing that it is best understood as 'the strategies used by governments to help govern', the authors counter the view that governments have been decentred. They show that far from receding, states are in fact enhancing their capacity to govern by developing closer ties with non-government sectors. Identifying five 'modes' of government (governance through hierarchy, persuasion, markets and contracts, community engagement, and network associations), Stephen Bell and Andrew Hindmoor use practical examples to explore the strengths and limitations of each. In so doing, they demonstrate how modern states are using a mixture of governance modes to address specific policy problems. This book demonstrates why the argument that states are being 'hollowed out' is overblown.

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Editorial Review

Review

'... voluminous coverage of the relevant literature, sophisticated handling of a range of theoretical perspectives and empirical demonstrations from a range of countries and settings ... students of governance, from those introducing themselves to the topic to seasoned researchers, will find much of value in this book.'

Gerry Stoker, University of Southampton

'Well written and well executed, this book makes a persuasive case that the state remains a central actor in contemporary governing even while modes of governing themselves have evolved - an important corrective to claims of `governance without government ...'

Grace Skogstad, University of Toronto

'Stephen Bell and Andrew Hindmoor have produced an exemplary scholarly study, which is meticulous, spirited and lucid ... This excellent work deserves wide attention and influence. In future debates concerning the formal apparatus of the state, it should be the basic reference.'

Ian Marsh, The Australian Journal of Political Science

About the Author

Stephen Bell is Professor and Head of the School of Political Science and International Studies at the University of Queensland.

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